

---

## Entrok and Little Women: Tell How Women Can Stand on Their Own Crown

Marsza Nurul Azmi <sup>1</sup>  
Agry Pramita <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>UIN Sunan Gunung Djati, Bandung

---

### ABSTRACT

*Women are often seen as weak and unable to match the degree of men. Stereotypes like this apply in all parts of the world and finally the feminist movement that focuses on upholding gender equality between men and women has emerged. To prove that women also have the right to be treated the same as men in the fields of work, education, and pursuit of their dreams. The purpose of this study is to examine what feminine values are contained in Entrok and Little Women. The values that are felt can be used as lessons for women to apply in life and become independent women who can stand on their own feet.*

**Keywords:** Women, Entrok and Little Women, feminism

---

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, the issue of feminism is still being discussed, especially with the easy access to social media such as Twitter and Instagram as well as on YouTube, there are many videos explaining whether feminism is needed, especially in Indonesia. I think that the trigger may be because sexual harrasment cases in Indonesia are still increasing, even from an unexpected environment, sexual harrasment can occur to women. From these cases, it seems that there is an image that women are weak and cannot fight anything that is given to them, even though women and men are fellow human beings who have their respective rights and obligations. The thought as previously mentioned is sexism as Baron and Byrne (1997) in Kuncoro (Prasangka dan Diskriminasi, 2007) state that sexism is gender dependent. According to Kuncoro, this sexism has developed since the time of the prophet where women

were often made slaves and slaves, continued with the times and until now which later gave birth to feminism and anti-feminism movements.

Basically this feminist movement tries to defend justice for humanity which is centered on women.

Quoted from one of IDN Times the article entitled *"10 Perilaku Seksisme yang Tanpa Sadar Sering Kita Lakukan, Mau Berubah?"* summarized 10 things that are usually said to women or men that create the view that certain genders are incapable or forbidden to do something, for example, you are not allowed to come home late because you are a woman, you don't need high school because you will only be a housewife, you don't have to do anything. heavy activities because you are a female, you don't have to work just to take care of the house because you are a woman and of course there are also sexist behaviors that are assigned to men but in this case we will only focus on the sections assigned to women.

From the examples in the article, the various limitations that are reasoned 'because you are a woman' can be felt in the novel *Entrok* by Okky Madasari whose story attempts to break down these boundaries by presenting female characters who are critical of the social constructions that are built in their environment. Okky Madasari is well-known as a novelist who carries the theme of women, politics and beliefs, most of her novels have the main character of a woman who struggles either for herself or for her family. First published on Kartini Day, April 21 2010, it seems that *Entrok* was written because seeing the reality that is happening in Indonesia, patriarchy is still very strong. In a talk show, Okky once said that her writing inspiration is the reality of society and according to him writing is the most elegant way to express anger. This fictional novel, set in 1950-1999, during the New Order era, tells the story of Marni and Rahayu, a pair of mothers and children of different generations wrapped up in issues of women, politics and beliefs. Marni is described as a Javanese woman who is still traditional and worships her ancestors while Rahayu is an educated and religious woman. Even though they often disagree, they both have in common their persistence in achieving what they want.

Talking about the persistence of women, in 1686, Louisa May Alcott published her umpteenth novel with the title *Little Women*. This novel was published twice, the first part in 1868 and the second part published in the UK in 1869 under the title

*Good Wives*. *Little Women* is based on the story of Alcott and her three sisters, it can also be called a semi autobiography. Similar to Okky Madasari, Louisa May Alcott wrote more than one work with the theme of women. *Little Women* has the main characters of four

sisters; Meg, Jo, Beth and Amy. They live in an ordinary family house with her mother who is usually called marmee. At that time Marmee takes care of her four daughters by herself because her husband has joined the American Civil War. The Little Women (the four sisters) live with their own dreams, Meg wants to be an actress, Jo wants to be a writer, Beth wants to be a pianist and Amy wants to be a good painter.

The author's purpose in researching the novels of Entrok and Little Women is because the female characters in the novels have strong, independent and courageous characters regardless of their shortcomings, but with the background of the 1800s and 1950-1990s they are considered strong women in dealing with social life. The focus of feminism research from the two novels is how women should be able to live independently, tough, educated but still gentle and loving.

## 2. METHODS

This research was conducted using a qualitative comparative study aimed at comparing the values of the female personality in the novel that was used as the object of research. In obtaining supporting theories, also conducted readings on feminism theory.

## 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

From different novels, which also come from different eras where Little Women is set in America in the 1800s while Entrok is set in Indonesia in the 1950-1990s, even though both of them both focus on the role of women. Both have their own characteristics where the hardships of living as a woman in those two eras were quite limited. With the existing limitations, the female characters in the two novels try to ward off it with their 'resistance' through several actions that show that women can too.

### 3.1. *Try yourself to make your wish come true*

Mary Wollstonecraft stated in her book *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*,

I must be allowed to explain myself. The generality of people cannot see or feel poetically, they want fancy, and therefore fly from solitude in search of sensible objects; but when an author lends them his eyes, they can see as he saw, and be amused by images they could not select, though lying before them (Wollstonecraft, 1841, p. 72).

Wollstonecraft stated that women should be allowed to do what they want for themselves. No one knows what their heart wants for their good. They should have known what they did not know.

in Entrok it is showed in the quote:

“Kamu mau ngangkat apa, Ni?” “Bukan, Kang. Bukan minta dibantu ngangkat. Aku mau ditolong, **aku mau ikut nguli kayak Kakang.**” Teja terbahak-bahak mendengar permintaanku. ... “Ni, kamu ada-ada saja. Nggak ada perempuan nguli. Nggak akan kuat. Sudah, perempuan itu kerja yang ringan-ringan aja. Ngupas singkong.” “**Aku kuat, Kang. Biasanya aku juga nggendong tenggok, nggendong goni.**”

...” “Tapi tetap nggak umum, Ni. Di pasar ini, nggak ada perempuan nguli.” “Tapi aku mau, Kang. **Aku butuh duit, Kang. Nggak mau lagi diupahi singkong.**” “Ya terserah. Kalau mau nguli ya monggo,” Kata Teja liris (Madasari, 2010, pp. 33-34).

In the narration above, Marni intends to nguli so that she can get money to buy entrok but her desire is broken by Teja who seems to underestimate the physical strength of women. With a strong will in the end, Marni keeps nguli. Here again, Marni succeeded in breaking the concept of women prevailing in her environment, where women are seen as weak and unable to do men's work. Whereas men and women should have the same position and job, the only difference is the biological concept they have. In Nurrachman, 2017: 133 Wollstonecraft says "A long tradition of writers has contributed to this degradation of women into "artificial, weak characters." The attitude of this writer is slightly represented by Teja because he had underestimated Marni even though in the end, he let her nguli.

And in Little Women we can find that the girls wanted to do something to give their mother

‘Mother didn’t say anything about our money, and she won’t wish us to give up everything. **Let’s each buy what we want, and have a liffle fun. I’m sure we work hard enough to earn it,**’ cried Jo, examining the heels of her shoes in a gentlemanly manner.

The girls are wishing for their christmas present, for their mother did not prepare any gifts for them. They represent a liberal feminist who are able to fulfill their desire for the christmas present.

From those quotations above, Marni and Jo represent the expectations of Wollstonecraft that women have the right to do what they want to get what they dream of. Those who are still very young, are not spoiled and are able to work on their own, have shown the seeds of a tough woman, even though at that time their desire was quite simple, but it could be a lighter in the future to face a more serious life, they were able to adapt and be strong to face it.

### 3.2. Prioritizing Education

Basically, this feminist movement aims to oppose patriarchy in which men have a higher rank than women. C N Trueman in Makyao (Assessment of Girls’ Admission in Mechanical Trade in Vocational Colleges in Tanzania: A Case Study Of Kilimanjaro Region, 2017) argues that Liberal Feminists believe that what can fight patriarchy is to make laws that can eradicate discrimination. Liberal feminists believe that changes in education rules and equality in equal pollicies will be able to fight patriarchy.

At Entrok education is considered important implied in the quote:

*Satu-satunya hal yang kami pahami bersama hanyalah aku harus sekolah. ... Dia akan mengeluarkan uang berapa saja agar aku sekolah. Tak peduli dia mencarinya dengan susah payah.* (Madasari, 2010, pp. 53-54)

Marni's desire to send her child to graduate school because she wants her child to be educated is not like her mother who doesn't go to school. Moreover, in the early days of the New Order like that the situation was so harsh, with an educated mind it could be a shield to face the harshness of life, especially in the novel the political situation at that time was boiling and the image of the apparatus was seen as bad, so that with an intelligent mind the public would not easy to use and can think more critically.

In *Little Women*, the need for education is implied in the quote:

The moment Aunt March took her nap, or was busy with company, **Jo hurried to this quiet place, and curling herself up in the easy chair, devoured poetry, romance, history, travels, and pictures like a regular bookworm.** But, like all happiness, it did not last long, ... , a shrill voice called, 'Josy-phine! Josy-phine! and she had to leave her paradise to wind yarn, wash the poodle, or **read Belsham's Essays by the hour together** (Alcott, 1953, pp. 53-53).

The girls were not only educated by Marmee, but there was Aunt March who always required Jo March to learn about education by reading. The reading that becomes the main reference is the *Essays* by William Belsham whose discussion is philosophical, historical and literary. This incident shows that women must be educated so that they are equipped to face real social life.

Although in both novels it is not explicitly stated that the importance of education is to fight patriarchy, here the role of education is still important, especially to face social life in the future.

### 3.3. *Developing Your Potential and Talent*

In *Little Women*, it is implied that being human we have the right to develop our potential. In the 1800s Girls in America were only staying at home and doing the household such as cooking and cleaning, they did not go to school, for the school was usually only for boys. It's not a limitation, even though they just stay at home, they still develop their respective talents as quoted below:

Beth

'She loved music so dearly, tried so hard to learn, and practiced away so patiently at the jingling old instrument, that it did seem as if someone (not to hint Aunt March) ought to help her' (Alcott, 1953, p. 55).

Jo

'I don't see how you can **write and act such splendid things, Jo.** You're a regular Shakespeare!' exclaimed Beth, (Alcott, 1953, p. 11)

...

'What! My little book I was so fond of, and worked over, and meant to finish before Father got home? Have you really burned it?' said Jo, turning very pale, (Alcott, 1953)

Amy

'I have ever so many wishes, but the pet one is to be an artist, and go to Rome, and do fine pictures, and be the best artist in the whole world,' was Amy's modest desire. (Alcott, 1953, p. 203)

### 3.4. Dare to Defend the Truth

If in Little Women the superiority of women in their time was that they were determined to develop their potential, in Entrok the advantages of women were described by their courage in fighting crime. An example is shown in the quote below:

*'... Kita cuma mau dengar cerita Bapak. Biar ditulis di koran. Biar orang-orang itu kapok semua.*

*Kalau perlu dipecat."*

*"Sudah, Mbak... saya sudah nrimo, ikhlas. Saya tidak mau lagi urusan sama mereka."*

*"Lha ya bukan soal nrimo atau ikhlas. Ini soal benar atau salah lho. Lha sampeyan bisa nrimo sekarang, terus kalau besok-besok ada kejadian lagi sama orang lain bagaimana?"*

At that time, Rahayu and his journalist friends wanted to help defend justice for a pedicab driver who was beaten by the authorities. Here, the value we can take is that as women we can also help uphold justice, we don't need to be afraid of who we will face, especially in this case, the majority are male officers.

### 3.5. Have Big Dreams for the Future

It is often said (especially in Indonesia) that it is better for a woman to stay at home when she is married and focus on taking care of her children, but what about her dreams in the past? Such a view hinders the dreams of women even though they also have the right to have high dreams like men.

Jo

*'... I think I shall write books, and get rich and famous, that would suit me, so that is my favorite dream.'* (Alcott, 1953, p. 203)

The quote above gives a message that women can dream about their future life. She can achieve success with the potential she has and in the way she likes.

## 4. CONCLUSIONS

Based on the results of the study found four main points about the ability of women to be independent. From these two novels we get many life lessons, especially the message of how to be a woman, but the most highlighted are five aspects, namely how women must try to achieve what they want, prioritize education, always develop self-potential, be brave in upholding justice and It's okay to have dreams as high as possible even though it's undeniable

---

that some Indonesians still think that no matter how high a woman's education and career is, women will still end up being housewives.

## 5. REFERENCES

Alcott, L. M. (1953). *Little Women*. London: Penguin Books.

Kuncoro, J. (2007). Prasangka dan Diskriminasi. *Proyeksi: Jurnal Psikologi*, 2(2), 1-16.  
doi:<https://doi.org/10.30659/p.2.2.1-16>

Madasari, O. (2010). *Entrok*. Jakarta, DKI Jakarta, Indonesia: Gramedia Pustaka Utama.

Makyao, J. I. (2017). *Assessment of Girls' Admission in Mechanical Trade in Vocational Colleges in Tanzania: A Case Study Of Kilimanjaro Region*. Open University of Tanzania. Digital Library of Open University of Tanzania.

Wollstonecraft, M. (1841). *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman: With Strictures on Political and Moral Subjects*. London, England: J. Johnson.